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SUBJECT: RWANDA VISIT ADDS PERSPECTIVE FOR JMG-TF

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Government of Rwanda (GoR) sponsored a visit of the Joint Monitoring Group Task Force (JMG-TF) to Rwanda June 4-6 to enhance understanding of the repatriation process for FDLR rebels remaining in the DRC. The 18-member group of DRC-based diplomats (Note: Goma Liaison Officer Gurney participated in the visit as the USG member of the JMG-TF. End Note), MONUC officials/press and representatives of the DRC and GoR visited the Matobo reorientation camp, the National Museum, the genocide museum and Murambi genocide site, in addition to meetings with the Executive Secretaries of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission and the Gacaca Commission. At the end of the visit, members of the JMG-TF met privately to discuss ways the international facilitation team could promote repatriation and support the peace process. Paragraph 13 requests Department guidance as to whether a statement of support for Kimia II is appropriate. End summary.

First Stop - FDLR Reorientation Camp

¶2. (SBU) Hundreds of recent Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) returnees greeted the JMG-TF delegates with songs and dancing at the Matobo reorientation camp, one hour from the border crossing at Gisenyi. A briefing by Rwandan Demobilization and Reintegration Center (RDRC) Head Jean Sayinzoga focused on the need to move forward with reconciliation, while never forgetting the awful consequences of ethnic hatred. Several returnees answered questions from JMG-TF members; one noted that virtually all FDLR in the eastern DRC were aware of MONUC's DDRRR program for repatriation, but commanders restricted access to MONUC and distorted conditions in Rwanda. Several focus on the hardships of living in the Congo forest and claimed many FDLR cadre seek to return to Rwanda.

¶3. (SBU) Three former FDLR elements testified that RDF operations helped pressure them to return. They said they had not faced discrimination since their return and that the continued aim of the FDLR was to forcefully overthrow the Rwandan Government. A female dependent said women and children had no rights in the bush. A recently returned ex-FDLR major noted that the FDLR membership comprised of three types: those too young to have participated in the genocide, those out of the country at the time, and those who took part in the genocide. Efforts to repatriate FDLR should focus on the first two groups.

The Challenge of National Unity and Reconciliation

¶4. (SBU) Following a visit to the Kigali Memorial Centre, JMG-TF delegates met with Fauma Ndagiza, Executive Secretary of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission. She outlined the major challenges to unity and reconciliation in the immediate aftermath of the genocide (instability, ethnic division and lack of justice). She gave an overview of activities undertaken by the Commission, including the co-ordination of a national dialogue in 1998-1999, the monitoring of institutions to ensure respect for

unity and reconciliation, and promotion of the Commission's core values of forgiveness, memory and education. She assessed that progress had been made at the national level to promote reconciliation, notably, that a Rwandan was discriminated against for ethnic reasons and that Rwandan leaders were sharing power. However, she conceded that challenges remained at the inter-personal level. In the context of discussion about how the JMG-TF could assist her commission, it was agreed that information programming to encourage FDLR elements to surrender and the promotion of awareness amongst receiving communities were important. Ms. Ntangiza noted that communication with young female FDLR elements was particularly important. She agreed in principle to the invitation of DDDR to visit the DRC to conduct information awareness activity.

15. (SBU) Delegates, who were unfamiliar with Rwanda and its history, noted that they had learned many details of how the genocide was planned and perpetrated. It was much harder to understand why the genocide was perpetrated, a critical question for inducing the rebels to repatriate. Ntangiza returned to the history of Rwanda since 1959, noting how Tutsis were systematically depersonalized and blamed as "outsiders" who caused all of Rwanda's problems. Many participants in the genocide were uneducated, and education was now a central part of reconciliation involving a full range of institutions. Ntangiza also stressed the culture of impunity, coercion and the failure of the church and international community to play restraining roles.

16. (SBU) Ntangiza acknowledged that not all returnees find a happy welcome. Some had lost land, or had difficulty finding work, and some communities did not welcome returnees. She noted the unique difficulties of perpetrators and victims living again side by side

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and how divisions had been overcome through mutual building construction and basket-weaving projects. Forgiveness was key, but perpetrators must acknowledge guilt and ask for forgiveness before it could be granted. While some genocide participants received long prison sentences, those who confess receive greatly reduced sentences. She recommended that the international community assist efforts to take testimonies from a wide range of returnees and broadcast them to the FDLR in the DRC to counter rumors that returnees were routinely killed.

Site Visits

17. (SBU) Beyond the meetings in Kigali, the GoR arranged for the group to visit the Murambi genocide memorial where an estimated 50,000 Tutsis were killed and buried. Participants also stopped at Rwanda's National Museum.

The Gacaca Jurisdictions

18. (SBU) Domitilla Mukantaganzwa, Executive Secretary of the National Service of Gacaca Jurisdictions, briefed the JMG-TF on the traditional gacaca trials, a process of clear concern to FDLR cadre in the DRC. She noted the enormous task facing authorities in the wake of the 1994 genocide, stressing the need for justice as well as reconciliation. Gacaca recognizes that killings took place under many different circumstances, and most participants can be categorized as planners, active perpetrators, or persons who committed crimes against property. Trials for categories 2 and 3 were almost at an end, but there are still almost 9,000 category 1 cases to be reviewed. Individuals must return to their communities before testimony can be heard, and Mukantaganzwa noted the problems with intimidation and faded memories after 15 years. The genocide traumatized both victims and killers, and the community process of "truth-telling" helps address the trauma.

19. (SBU) Asked how MONUC and the GDRC could address FDLR fears of the gacaca process, Mukantaganzwa said rebels who maintain their innocence should have the power of their convictions and return. Defendants who have been falsely accused have proven the charges against them were false. FDLR members who were 14 years old or younger at the time of the genocide are not prosecuted. Finally,

those guilty of genocidal acts have many paths to reintegration into the community. Those guilty of genocide crimes will serve some prison time, but those who confess also receive suspended sentences and community service, which allow for relatively rapid reinstatement.

JMG-TF Meeting - Which Way Forward?

¶10. (SBU) Chairman Samba Tall convened the JMG-TF meeting on June 7, inviting the Head of the Rwandan Demobilization and Reintegration Commission to speak on the importance of information programs both in and outside Rwanda. He called on the JMG-TF and MONUC to assist in the diffusion of information, noting the importance of meeting with local leaders and combatants to encourage repatriation. He also said that the trip had shown that the environment in Rwanda was conducive to return. DDR/RR reported that the number of those repatriating had decreased since the end of RDF operations in the DRC. The representative of DDDR noted that military pressure should be maintained, but that information programming remained crucial. To this end, he reiterated the invitation to the Executive Secretary of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission to participate in information and awareness programming activity in the DRC.

¶11. (SBU) In the closed meeting that followed, the chair (MONUC) raised the issue of how the JMG-TF could support the raising of awareness on both sides of the border, as well as the matter of how to facilitate activity to complement Kimia II operations. The DRC representative emphasized the importance of remaining within the Terms of Reference of the JMG-TF, but agreed to widening information broadcasting activities and inviting the FARDC to provide an update to the JMG-TF on Kimia II operations. The Rwandan representative noted that the rapprochement between Rwanda and the DRC had resulted in the neutralization of the CNDP and allowed the GDRC to reassert its authority in all parts of the country. He said that a relatively short list of most wanted perpetrators of genocide had been shared with the GDRC and noted that the JMG-TF visit to Rwanda had demonstrated that the environment in the country was conducive to return. However, he added with concern that the FDLR leadership, particularly that of the FDLR faction RUD ("Ralliement pour l'Unité et la Démocratie" in French), continued to have freedom of movement in Europe and North America. He noted that the FDLR was still in North and South Kivu and he called on the JMG-TF to assist in

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identifying those that remained active in supporting the FDLR. He also agreed on the importance of supporting Kimia II with further visits of the JMG-TF to the field in DRC.

¶12. (SBU) In interventions by members of the International Facilitation (IF), France (on behalf of the EU) emphasized the importance of neutralizing the FDLR leadership outside the DRC. The French representative suggested favouring younger FDLR leaders who did not necessarily share the same ideology and language as older leaders. Goma Liaison Officer Gurney suggested a statement, supporting Kimia II operations, to be discussed at the next meeting.

The South African representative suggested having a meeting of Special Envoys to follow-up on previous recommendations by the JMG-TF. The representative from the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) stressed the importance of asserting pressure on the FDLR leadership. He also informed the JMG-TF that the ICGLR would meet later in June to take stock of Kimia II operations. The representative of the African Union said conditions should be imposed on the exile of rebel leaders in Europe and elsewhere. In particular, they should be required to stop all activity in support of armed groups before being given refugee status in host countries. The JMG-TF agreed to meet again on June 19 in Goma.

¶13. (SBU) Comment and Guidance Request: The visit to Rwanda was extremely valuable for the non-Rwandan JMG-TF members to better understand the history of the crisis, which continues to haunt the DRC. It also forged a common sense of purpose among JMG-TF members, pulling in representatives of the Great Lakes and the AU who often skip the biweekly meetings in Goma. Thoughts from addressees on ways to intensify international efforts to pressure FDLR and RUD

leaders abroad are welcome. We also request guidance as to whether a statement of support for Kimia II is appropriate, and suggest the following elements: The U.S. continues to support the Nairobi Communique to bring peace to the eastern Congo, and Kimia II is a vital component of that agreement; perpetrators of retribution will be held accountable; the rapprochement between the Governments of Rwanda and the DRC is a positive development and deserves international support; the people of the DRC and Rwanda deserve peace and FDLR elements inside the DRC must return home.

¶14. (SBU) Comment continued: The JMG, set up to monitor implementation of the Nairobi Communique, still has a role to play, but the GDRC appears unenthusiastic about real activism. At several recent JMG-TF meetings, GDRC representatives have stalled inquiries and suggested projects, and the June 7 meeting was no exception. The GDRC is, however, moving forward with Operation Kimia II, albeit haltingly, and the GoR delegates in the JMG-TF appeared satisfied with the partnership and comfortable with the role of the IF. MONUC has a vital role in stabilizing the region and implementing international agreements to build a lasting peace. End comment.

¶15. (U) Final note: USG participation in this event was limited to the official U.S. representative on the JMG, i.e., Embassy Kinshasa's poloff in Goma. Embassy Kigali accepted Embassy Kinshasa's invitation to review this cable, which it (Kigali) has cleared. End final note.

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